

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION



Enclosure 2b
October 20, 2011

Work Session

RIDE

Thursday, October 20, 2011

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Attending: George Caruolo (chairman), Lorne Adrain, Carolina Bernal, Colleen Callahan, Robert Carothers, Karin Forbes, Patrick Guida, Mat Santos, Betsy Shimberg

The meeting convened at 11:35 a.m.

Chairman Caruolo welcomed everyone and acknowledged that the meeting was a session of the Board of Regents duly noticed and he asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Approval of Agenda

On a motion duly made by Regent Shimberg and seconded by Regent Guida it was

VOTED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education accept the day's agenda.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: G. Caruolo, L. Adrain, C. Bernal, C. Callahan, R. Carothers, K. Forbes, P. Guida, M. Santos, B. Shimberg

NAYS: 0

He next took the opportunity to congratulate Regent Guida as the newly elected President-elect of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE).

Commissioner's Remarks

Commissioner Gist echoed Chairman Caruolo's remarks in congratulating Regent Guida on his election as the President-elect of NASBE.

Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools (PLAs):

Commissioner Gist shared with the Board a report of the initial year of reform work in the first cohort of PLA schools in Central Falls and Providence. The report described several key areas, such as leadership teams at each PLA campus, School Improvement Grant (SIG) fund allocations, and programmatic accomplishments.

The Academy for Career Exploration (formerly Textron Chamber of Commerce Academy) (ACE):

At the November 3rd BOR meeting, Commissioner Gist will be asking the BOR to approve ACE's request for an amendment to its charter, including changes to its governance structure.

Necessity for School Construction – Little Compton and North Kingstown

Commissioner Gist briefed the BOR on RIDE's draft recommendations on school construction projects for the Little Compton School District and the North Kingstown School District. RIDE once again worked with the General Assembly on these two projects and has been given the go-ahead to bring them before the BOR for approval at its November 3rd meeting.

Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Caruolo deferred Chairman's Remarks.

Discussion Items:

Certification Redesign:

A chart was shared with the BOR that identifies the many topics that were raised both in support of and opposition to the proposed regulations for certification redesign through the public comment process.

The public comment process included three public hearings, and additional written comments were collected between September 1 and October 11, 2011, from many organizations and the public at large.

At the suggestion of Regent Guida, Mary Ann Snider, Chief of the Office of Educator Excellence and Instructional Effectiveness, and Lisa Foehr, Director of the Office of Educator Quality, gave a brief introduction on each topic on the chart and clarified questions from the BOR around:

- whether RIDE received any reaction from the Certification Advisory Policy Board (CPAB) and whether its concerns been addressed;
- preparation and supports of candidates in the Alternate Route Programs;
- whether or not the opportunity to get a new certification through an Alternate Pathway program is included in the proposed regulations; and
- the Expert Residency Program.

There was reflective discussion over revising the middle level grades certification section of the proposal:

- concerns over elementary certified K - 6th grade teachers being able to teach 6th grade at a 6th – 8th grade middle school;
- concerns over secondary certified teachers being able to teach 7th and 8th graders at a middle school; and
- requiring teachers to get middle-level endorsements.

Chairman Caruolo cautioned about asking teachers to do more as far as getting extra endorsements in order to qualify to teach at different grade levels because it could potentially cause them not to agree to reassignments because of the increased tasks, time, and aggravation. He further went on to say that if a principal and a superintendent feel that a good teacher can handle the job, who is the state to want to roadblock that?

When it comes to making decisions about where to place teachers, his preference would be for flexibility. He is also very interested in seeing people in the schools making common sense decisions about how their schools are run, and that includes personnel. He is very concerned about minutia and would propose that anything that is put forward have an out-clause to allow the locals to make decisions that they think are in the best interest of their children, even if it results in their making the occasional error. He worries about the load that is being placed on teachers that commits their time into areas that do not involve teaching and only theoretically involve bettering themselves as teachers. He would not want to see nitpicking rules that will stop a sixth-grade teacher from being able to teach sixth grade at a middle school. He also understands the benefit of the feedback structures that are being put into place and also the preparation and continuing training that we are also focused on. It seems that we could allow flexibility, with some degree of accountability, and not be tying either administration or individual teachers in knots as they move through the school year. Regent Carothers reminded Chairman Caruolo that there are federal regulations that are fleshed out by Boards such as the BOR that we have to comply with. Chairman Caruolo recognizes and understands that there are federal regulations that need to be followed and honored, but if the BOR can come up with a plan that gives us the best of the world in which we find ourselves in, we have an obligation to try.

There was discussion around evaluations and how principals and superintendents should be held to the same standards as the teachers they oversee.

Regent Guida asked for clarification to note that it should be the responsibility of the administrator to evaluate and decide if a sixth-grade teacher is qualified to teach at the middle-school level.

Next, Mary Ann Snider reviewed and answered questions on the Linking Certification to Evaluation Results part of the proposed regulations:

- Although the regulations will take effect in 2012, action will not be taken until 2015 for initial teachers and 2017 for those teachers who hold professional licenses. In the intervening time, RIDE will study the evaluation system in great depth and will provide annual reports to the BOR on the findings on whether or not the evaluation system is working as it was designed.

- Every school district is obligated to have an appeals process at the local level to be utilized by a teacher prior to any state action being taken.
- The reinstatement process: Teachers would have to have a retraining period, such as teaching with a mentor.
- Student growth and learning piece: student learning objectives
 - o This aspect is not well understood by the field, and some said that it is premature to link the evaluation system to certification – particularly raising questions around the student-growth piece.

Regent Callahan shared her concerns with tying certification to the evaluation part of the proposed regulations and feels that at this time RIDE's focus should be only on the evaluation system and making sure that people understand the multiple components of the system. It is too early to link the two at this point, when the system is just beginning to be rolled out. She said that this portion of the regulations is not ready for prime time and should be put off until there is more evidence around how the new evaluation system is going to work and the impact it will have, particularly the student growth piece.

Under the Grade Level Configuration part of the proposed regulations, Regent Shimberg questioned why kindergarten did not overlap with K-6 when so many schools are K-6. Lisa Foehr noted that at one point K was under the elementary certification, but after many conversations with the early childhood community, which felt very strongly that K should remain under the early childhood configuration, RIDE decided that it remain the same.

BOR FY 2012 Revised and FY 2013 Budget Proposal

Carolyn Dias, Chief of the Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies, went over and answered questions on the BOR's FY 2012 Revised and FY 2013 Budget Proposal that the BOR will be asked to approve at the November 3rd BOR meeting.

On a motion duly made by Regent Bernal and seconded by Regent Guida it was

VOTED:	That	the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting.
	Vote:	6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:
	YEAS:	G. Caruolo, L. Adrain, C. Bernal, K. Forbes, P. Guida, B. Shimberg
	NAYS:	0

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.